

# Fire Connection

OFFICE OF THE IDAHO STATE  
FIRE MARSHAL

A Division of the Idaho  
Department of Insurance

Volume 18, Number 2

June 2006

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Eagle Fire Women
- Downsides of Growth
- IIMAS

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## Idaho Falls Police Officer, Two Oakley Firefighters Receive Idaho Medal of Honor

An Idaho Falls police officer and two Oakley firefighters were honored for extraordinary heroism above and beyond the call of duty as recipients of the Idaho Medal of Honor.

The Idaho Medal of Honor Commission announced the state of Idaho's highest honor for law enforcement officers, firefighters and EMTs was awarded to Officer Darin Moulton of the Idaho Falls Police Department, Captain Troy Greenwell of the Oakley Fire Department and Firefighter/EMT Joe Stringham of the Oakley Fire Department.

"The selfless courage demonstrated by Officer Moulton, Captain Greenwell and Firefighter/EMT Stringham reflects the commitment to service and dedication to the protection of others that the legislature intended to recognize when it created the medal," Idaho Medal of Honor Commission Chairman William von Tagen said. "We are truly fortunate in Idaho to have these three men serving our communities."



*Oakley Capt. Troy Greenwell, Firefighter/EMT Joe Stringham and Governor Jim Risch*

Governor Jim Risch, who was then Lieutenant Governor, presented the Medals of Honor during ceremonies at the Idaho Peace Officers Memorial in Meridian on May 12.

Officer Moulton was honored for his actions on August 12, 2004, when he responded to an "officers need assistance, emergency" call. Two officers had been brutally assaulted. One officer had been severely beaten. The other had been shot. Officer Moulton was informed of the fight and that a shot had been fired. Upon arrival, he discovered two officers down. The suspect was climbing off the wounded, bloodied officer, and the officer was screaming, "Shoot him!" Officer Moulton, unaware whether the suspect still had a firearm, did not hesitate, but rushed at him. Officer Moulton punched the suspect in the face,



*Idaho Falls Police Officer Darin Moulton, Governor and Mrs. Risch*

knocking him to the ground. Officer Moulton then handcuffed the suspect and attended to the wounded officer until an ambulance arrived. Later, when asked why he

had not shot the suspect, Officer Moulton replied, "I just wanted to end it."

Captain Greenwell and Firefighter/EMT Stringham, both volunteers with the Oakley

*(continued on page 7)*



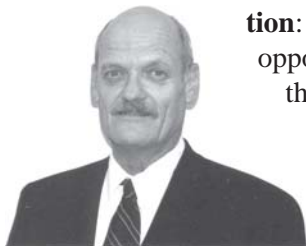
# State Fire Marshal's Message

By Mark Larson  
State Fire Marshal

I have several points of interest in this issue of our newsletter:

## Fire code as a minimum standard: Idaho

Code Section 41-253 states that the fire code adopted by the state fire marshal is the "minimum standard for the protection of life and property from fire and explosions in the state of Idaho." This same minimum standard status applies to the electrical, plumbing and heating, ventilation and air conditioning codes (HVAC) adopted in the state of Idaho. The big difference is in the enforcement of the codes. Electrical and plumbing inspectors are empowered "state-wide" while the enforcement of the fire code is, rightfully so, left to the "local" authorities. This unusual enforcement circumstance has led to considerable discussion as to "who can do what" in several parts of the state, with no clear resolution on the horizon.



**Countywide collaboration:** My work provides me the opportunity to travel around this great state and see how things are being done in more than one backyard. I am seeing more efforts between fire agencies, planning and

zoning, building departments, and various commissioner groups to establish better working relationships than I have seen in previous years. The enforcement level of the minimum standards mentioned earlier depends on the collaborative effort of all of these groups. I applaud and encourage the efforts of those departments that are working to ensure consistent application of the fire code. We must all work to ensure a proper response to the almost overwhelming impact that the influx of people is having on our state. Growth is unavoidable; it is indeed here to stay.

**Fireworks:** The efforts of this office to amend the fireworks law, first passed in 1997, in this legislative session got nowhere. We worked with

fire chiefs, representatives from the fireworks industry, and legislators to close up some loopholes that have been in the law since it was first passed in 1997. Our efforts were kicked in the dirt, the fireworks industry hired a very expensive lobbyist and he ensured our efforts never saw the light of day. This was a very good example of the old adage about people who like law or sausage should not watch either being made. We will work with our existing law and redouble our efforts next year. More news on fireworks will be coming later.

**Elections:** By the time this newsletter is circulated, the primary elections will be over and candidates will be identified for the fall elections. Pay attention to who is running, ask them to explain their positions on issues that concern you. In many parts of the state the incumbents for state level offices are unopposed. Reach out to those elected officials and offer to be an informational resource for them on fire related issues. Let them know you are there!!!!!!

## Code Corner

By Mark Larson  
State Fire Marshal

### International Fire Code, 2006 Edition

The 2006 Edition of the International Fire Code (IFC) is now available for purchase from the International Code Council (ICC). The books are available from the ICC website or from their resource center in Washington State by calling 1-800-231-4776 extension 112.

The Idaho Fire Chiefs Association (IFCA) has worked out an arrange-

ment with the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association and their "bookstore" to make a wide variety of fire service publications available to IFCA members at a discount. Codebooks can be purchased through the IFCA website with a rebate going to the IFCA as another source of revenue.

The Idaho Building Code Board is on track to adopt the 2006 Edition of the codes they use, starting July 1, 2007. I will write an administrative rule to adopt the 2006 Edition of the fire code starting July 1, 2007, if their

efforts receive legislative approval in early 2007.

I encourage those of you with code enforcement responsibilities to get a copy of the code as soon as you can and review the new provisions. If you have any concerns or questions, give us a call and we will be happy to discuss them with you. We would also be happy to discuss the possibility of amendments to code language as written.

## Eagle Fire Women's Combat Challenge Team Is Ready to Win

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006, the women of Eagle Fire will compete in the Stihl Mid-Atlantic Regional Championship in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The team consists of four women, Yvonne Fisher, Angela Reed, Sarah Defur and Ashley Nichols all from Eagle Fire Department.

The Firefighter Combat challenge seeks to encourage firefighter fitness and demonstrate the profession's rigors to the public. Wearing full bunker gear and air pack breathing apparatus, groups of competitors simulate the physical demands of real life firefighting by performing five physically demanding tasks testing each competitor's skills, strength, agility and endurance against other



firefighters around the world.

During this competition, pairs of competitors perform a linked series of five tasks that include; hose carry (running a 45 lb. hose bundle to the top of a five story tower); hose hoist (hoisting a 45 lb. roll of hose to the top of the tower); forcible entry evolution (descend the tower to a forcible entry evolution utilizing a 9 lb. shot mallet to drive a 160 lb. steel beam a horizontal distance of 5 ft.); hose deployment (advancing a charged hose line 75 ft. and hitting a target with the water stream); and victim rescue (barrel chest a 175 lb. dummy 100 ft. to the finish line). The competitors race against themselves, their opponents and the clock.

Participation in the Firefighter's Combat Challenge takes an incredible

amount of determination and hard work. The women of Eagle Fire participate in these events on their own as a way to professionally better themselves and the department they serve.

This year the Combat Challenge Team is hosting a golf tournament to help raise funds for the upcoming 2006 season. The golf tournament will be held at **River Birch Golf Course on June 17, 2006**. If you are interested in more details, contact the Eagle Fire Department team at 939-6463.

As the women prepare for their first competition and the tournament, please join us in wishing them well. We will keep you posted on the outcome.

**Eagle Fun Days**  
**June 10 -11<sup>th</sup>**

## Update on Fire Chief and Firefighter's Injuries

On November 11, 2005, Jerome Rural Fire Chief Joe Robinette and firefighter Kevin Gellings were inspecting a truck tire fire. Gellings was within a six feet and Robinette was closer when the tire exploded.

They were both injured from the impact as debris flew from the explosion. They were treated for eye and facial injuries and Robinette sustained a broken left hand. Gellings was treated and released a few days later, but Chief Robinette is still

undergoing treatment at this time. He is expected to have a few more surgeries to his left eye but feels good about regaining 75% of his vision in that eye. As a paid fire chief, he is restricted to light duty until his release.

## IFIRS

### Building Valuation Data (BVD)

What do estimated dollar loss figures on a fire incident report show? They monetarily show the magnitude of the incident, i.e. the replacement costs to the property owner. They are a measurement of how well our fire prevention efforts are working. The pre-incident

numbers can give us an estimated amount that is saved.

Your resources are the property owner, the insurance adjuster, the Property Insurance Loss Report (PILR) provided by insurance companies, and the International Code Council (ICC) Building Valuation Data sheet. The ICC data is updated every six months. The next update

will be August 2006. BVD was developed to assist in assessing permit fees and shows the average construction costs by square foot of each classification/occupancy group.

Check out our web site [www.doi.idaho.gov](http://www.doi.idaho.gov) and go to State Fire Marshal and click on Building Valuation Data.

## The Downsides of Growth: Homeowners Beware

Fire departments are finding their resources spreading thin as more and more homes are being built in and out of fire districts. Subdivisions are springing up on what was once rural farmland and urban-wildland interface areas. Can public services keep up with the demand? The following incidents have been challenges to local departments and should have homeowners concerned:

Large homes in remote areas - In a rural area of St. Maries fire district, a 12,000 square foot home caught fire. Firefighters were hampered by the remoteness of the home, a weight limit on a bridge they had to cross, being able to attack the fire from only three sides, and no water source close to the scene. The duration of this incident was over 30 hours with 25 apparatus and 62 personnel responding? The home did not have sprinklers and was a \$10 million loss.

No fire district - A late night call for help in a rural area that firefighters call "no man's land" allowed a home to burn to the ground. The rural area

is south of Boise and east of Kuna. Three agencies did not respond. They said the home was not part of their area of coverage and would jeopardize the protection of the people who pay taxes. The home was a total loss. The number of homes not covered by firefighting services is increasing as isolated areas are becoming more populated.

Hydrants run dry- - Volunteer firefighters responded to a fire in Harrison with 1,000 gallons of water in the truck. After eight minutes of spraying water on the chimney fire, the truck went dry. Upon connecting to the fire hydrant in front of the house, there was not enough water to continue to fight the fire. A hose had to be connected to a nearby hydrant. The home was a total loss.

What can homeowners do?

They need to ask these questions:

1. Do we have fire protection?
2. Where is the nearest station located?
3. What is the average response time for this station?

4. Do we have a working smoke detector?
5. Have we practiced exit drills (E.D.I.T.H.)?
6. Would an Automatic Extinguishing System be in order for our location?

Scenarios such as these show the obstacles that prove challenging to all paid and volunteer departments in our state. Last year there were 1,601 structure fires in Idaho. The toll these fires took is staggering; 16 residents died and another 51 were injured. The estimated losses totaled over \$31 million with neighboring departments assisting over 552 times.

It just takes minutes for fires to get out of control and cause injuries. Early detection does save lives and property. Last year reported contained fires (fires that did not escape beyond the non-combustible container) totaled 35.8% of all fires. The amount of property saved was greatly increased with fewer injuries. Early detection makes a difference.

| Structure Fires    | %             | ResTM          | Durat          | App        | Per        | \$Loss              | Civ Inj   | Civ Fatal | FS Inj    | FS Fatal | Total Bldg |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------|------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Not Confined       | 64.2%         | 0:07:03        | 2:08:47        | 4.9        | 11.1       | \$30,937,032        | 34        | 16        | 14        | 0        | 856        |
| Confined Fires     | 35.8%         | 0:05:57        | 0:37:16        | 3.2        | 7.6        | \$134,220           | 2         | 0         | 1         | 0        | 38         |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>0:06:40</b> | <b>1:36:00</b> | <b>4.3</b> | <b>9.8</b> | <b>\$31,071,252</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>894</b> |

## Idaho Fire Chiefs Association

By Doug Brown, President

The 2006 Idaho Fire Chief's Association Annual Conference was held May 4-6 at the Doubletree - Riverside Hotel in Garden City. Approximately 175 people attended the conference.

In the election of IFCA officers for 2006-2007, the following incumbents

were re-elected: President Doug Brown (Caldwell FD) and Secretary-Treasurer Richard Davies (Nampa FD). Dean Ellis (Idaho Falls FD) was elected as the new Vice-President and Mark Wendelsdorf (Caldwell FD) was elected as the new Vice-President to the Western Fire Chiefs Association.

James Woydziak (Nampa FD) was elected as District 3 Director; Ron Anderson was elected as the District 4 Director and Mike Warner was elected as the District 7 Director. (The IFCA added a 7th District recently as part of a re-districting measure intended to improve operability for the state

(continued on page 6)



## New Addition to Fire Training Grounds

*By Melissa Close, Nampa Fire Prevention and Public Education Specialist*

The Nampa Fire Department is pleased to announce a new addition to their training center located at 300 West Railroad. The new structure that measures 12'x 8'x 8' is designed to provide fire investigators with a controlled environment to evaluate various ignition sequences that are considered while determining the causes of fire.

While many "burn cells" can be cost prohibitive for local fire departments, Nampa Fire's cell was relatively simple to construct and was certainly affordable. The wood frame structure which is covered

with steel siding will withstand extreme fire conditions including post flashover.

Material cost for the entire building including the concrete floor, was \$2750.00. The cost for sheet rock to reline the interior after a burn is approximately \$100.00. On-duty personnel were utilized to assemble the structure in an effort to minimize the cost of labor. The funding was provided by the Nampa Fire Department and a grant furnished by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Fire suppression personnel and the public also appreciate the value of watching a compartment fire transition to flashover while

maintaining a safe distance from the effects of smoke and heat.

For more information about building your own burn cell, contact Deputy Chief Doug Strosnider at 468-5770.



## It has been said, "In the realm of fire the law is a thing mothered by necessity and sired by great tragedy"

*By Jim Macklin, Deputy State Fire Marshal, Lewiston, Idaho*

Tragedy drives building and fire codes. We are idealists and refuse to allow another tragedy to occur from the same cause or circumstance. The following are some examples of tragedy and circumstance:

- In 1876, a fire occurred in the Brooklyn Theater killing 295 people. Fire spread and intensity was caused by combustible decorative material.
- In 1903, a fire occurred in Chicago's Iroquois Theater killing 603 people. Fire was caused by an arc light too close to combustible material. Exits were improperly marked and human logjams developed at each door.

- In 1940, a fire occurred in a small dance hall in Mississippi. The dance hall was 120 feet x 38 feet and occupied by over 700 people. Two hundred seven people died.

International Fire Code (IFC) Sections 806 Interior Trim and Decorative Materials, Chapter 10, Means of Egress and Occupant Loading, get their genesis from past tragedies. Other past tragedies include schools, nursing homes, industrial facilities and hotel and conflagrations. Improved codes have been handed down to us by our predecessors who felt the same way we do and we will be handing down improved codes to those who follow us.

We are idealists one and all. When I began in the fire service, we

were losing 15,000 to 17,000 people nationwide per year to fire. We have lowered that number to 5,000 per year. All we need do is determine where these losses are occurring. This is not difficult; it would appear we are losing lives in the home. People are dying where they live. We know properly installed working smoke detectors save lives and we know loss of life has not occurred in a home equipped with approved automatic sprinkler systems. We must continue doing as we have been because it is working. We must redouble our efforts to ensure homes have working smoke detectors and are equipped with approved automatic sprinkler systems. Let us not repeat history!

## “Idaho Intrastate Mutual Aid System” (IIMAS) Project

Idaho is one of ten states selected to develop a statewide (intrastate) mutual aid system under a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant managed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). The Idaho Fire Chiefs Association (IFCA) will manage the project in Idaho. Project Manager IFCA President Doug Brown says, “A comprehensive statewide mutual aid plan is long overdue for Idaho. We have a lot of good but fragmented, mutual aid plans and agreements already in place. We don’t need to reinvent the wheel. This project will draw from the best of those existing plans to create a master plan. The plan will provide better and timely coordination of primarily fire and EMS resources for major emergencies. Last summer Hurricanes Katrina and Rita taught us all the importance of each state having a strong and effective statewide mutual aid plan. We have learned from their experience on the Gulf Coast.”

Stakeholder meetings have taken place in Boise, Pocatello and Coeur

d’Alene to inform emergency service providers of the scope and purpose of the project. Interest is high and volunteers from various agencies and emergency service disciplines will comprise a Steering Committee to compile the plan. Subcommittees such as Enabling Legislation, Communications, Resources Inventory, Qualifications and Rating, Activation, Exercises and Drills, etc. will be formed to develop the different modules of the plan

Idaho’s plan will be “all-hazard” in its capabilities, being able to help in the response to any kind of disaster anywhere in the state. Representatives from federal, state and local agencies will be working together to develop the plan. Participation will not be mandatory. Any jurisdiction can participate or opt out.

The IFCA is also participating in a concurrent interstate (state-to-state) Mutual Aid System Task Force (MASTF) project exploring exchange of mutual aid resources across state lines. Chief Mark Wendelsdorf of the

Caldwell Fire Department is the IFCA representative on that project. Several western states are involved in the MASTF project.

Both projects will be valuable for Idaho where the closest available mutual aid is often across a state line or even from Canada. “Our IIMAS committees have until October to produce a draft plan. We have some working excellent model mutual aid plans from Florida, Ohio, Illinois and California to help guide us. Their plans have been tried and tested – they work. We also have a Project Mentor, Chief Mike Warren from Corona, California, who will help provide insight and objectivity to our committees. We’ll take the most applicable parts from the model plans and roll those into a plan that is tailor-made to fit our needs here. The true beneficiaries of this will be the people of Idaho,” said Brown.

Go to the IAFC’s website at [www.iafc.org/mutualaid](http://www.iafc.org/mutualaid) to learn firsthand about these projects and view the model plans.

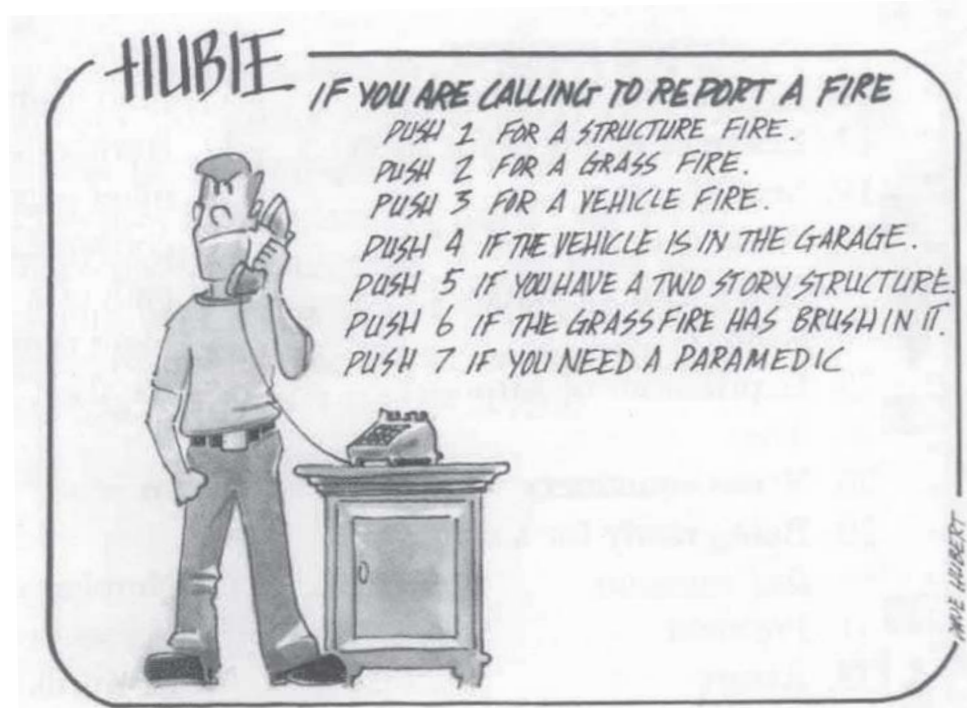
### Idaho Fire Chiefs

(continued from page 4)

mutual aid system that is currently under development.)

In division elections: David Gates was elected as the President of the Training Officer’s Division and Kevin Courtney was elected as the President of the Volunteer Division.

The 2007 IFCA Annual Conference will be held from May 3-5 in Lewiston.



## Medal of Honor

(continued from front page)

Fire Department, received the Idaho Medal of Honor for their heroic rescue of Carl Covington from a November 6, 1996, fire at Covington's residence in Oakley. The two were deployed to locate Mr. Covington who was believed to be in the home. Captain Greenwell and Firefighter Stringham entered the back door of the home and began their search. They did not find Mr. Covington in the living room, where it was believed he would be, and flames and heat forced the men to exit the home. Captain Greenwell and Firefighter Stringham re-entered the burning building in a second attempt to locate Mr. Covington. By now, the smoke and flames were pushing dangerously low from the ceiling. With air tank alarms ringing, the men again retreated from the burning home. They crawled back in a third time with fresh air tanks. The door to a room in a corridor they had previously searched was closed, and they initially thought it was locked. When they pushed harder, however, they were able to open it a few inches. Reaching behind the door, Captain Greenwell felt Mr.

Covington's leg. They forced the door open far enough for Captain Greenwell to get inside. He was able to lift Mr. Covington and pull him from the house with Firefighter Stringham's assistance. Mr. Covington survived this ordeal thanks to the bravery and persistence of these two men.

According to Oakley Fire Chief Harlo Clark, a few years after the incident Troy enrolled at Idaho State University. He was studying to be a physical therapist. While there, he decided that he wanted to become a doctor. Furthering his education and enrolling into medical school, he received a full paid financial award from the U.S. Army. While doing his first internship studies in Washington D.C. in September of 2001, he was one of the first emergency personnel on the scene at the Pentagon on that fateful day, 9-11. Having first-hand knowledge of firefighting and medicine; he was an invaluable assistant in our nation's time of greatest need. Since that time, he has completed his medical schooling and is a resident at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Joe has continued to be an active firefighter for the Oakley Fire Depart-

ment and an active EMT for the Oakley Quick Response Unit where he currently serves as vice-president. His attendance at fire meetings and training sessions is nearly flawless. He has fought in nearly every fire call each year.

Congratulations to all recipients.

*The Idaho Legislature established the Idaho Medal of Honor in 2004 to honor Idaho police officers, firefighters and EMTs who were killed in the line of duty or distinguished themselves by exceptional meritorious conduct.*

*The first Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously to Idaho State Trooper Linda Huff who lost her life in a shootout at the ISP office in Coeur d'Alene. Trooper Huff protected the lives of her Idaho State Police colleagues through her bravery under fire and determination to stop the assailant from entering the building.*



This is my last issue of the Idaho Fire Connection. I would like to thank all of you with whom I have worked with all these years. You have gone the extra mile to write articles, look up information, submit pictures and other pertinent information for this publication. It has been my pleasure knowing and working with all of you. You do make a difference!

The Editor

*Au revoir   Auf Wiedersehen   Arrivederci   Aloha*

## False Calls

**Every 1.7 hours an Idaho fire department responds to a false call. These calls cost departments a total of \$1,023,850\* during 2005.**

*\*Fire in Idaho 2005*

# Who to Call?

## State Fire Marshal

Mark Larson - 208-334-4370 or cell 867-3720

## Investigations

Dick Hahn 208-334-4370 or cell 867-3215 - Boise

Ivan Hibbert 208-525-7022 or cell 705-5621 - Idaho Falls

Mark Aamodt 208-769-1447 or cell 699-3577 - Coeur d' Alene

## Code Interpretations/Fire Investigations

Scott Buck - 208-334-4370 or cell 867-3395 - Boise

Jim Macklin - 208-799-5024 or cell 699-3588 - Lewiston

Terry Edwards - 208-525-7022 or cell 705-5620 - Idaho Falls

## Building/Alarm Plans Review

Alan Perry 208-334-4370 or cell 921-7838 - Boise

## Certification and Licensing

Shirley Carnahan - 208-334-4370 - Boise

## Incident Reporting

IFIRS - 208-334-4373 or cell 867-5186 - Boise

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